

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUJUMB 00595 251526Z

47

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 DRC-01 /154 W

----- 012388

R 241450Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4475

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMCONSUL BUKAVU

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0595

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BY

SUBJECT: SIMBANANIYE LOSES MINISTRY OF PLAN; JRR HEAD GIVEN

REF: BUJUMBURA 574

1. PRESIDENTIAL DECREES OF SEPTEMBER 24 ABOLISH MINISTRY OF THE PLAN AND CREATE A TECHNICAL STUDIES BUREAU IN THE PRESIDENCY IN ITS PLACE. DONATIEN BIHUTE, HITHERTO AMBASSADOR TO ZAIRE, IS NAMED SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE BUREAU WITH THE RANK AND PREREQUISITES OF A MINISTER.

2. COMMENT: DETACHMENT OF PLANNING MINISTRY FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IS LONG OVERDUE SINCE FONMIN SIMBANANIYE HAS GIVEN IT VIRTUALLY NO ATTENTION AND HAS ALLOWED ITS STAFF TO DWINDLE ALMOST TO ZERO. MOREOVER, PLANNING FUNCTION PROBABLY MOST LIKELY TO BE CARRIED OUT EFFECTIVELY WHEN SEPARATED FROM OPERATING MINISTRIES. THUS FRG AMBASSADOR, WHOSE COUNTRY SUPPLIES ECONOMIC PLANNING ADVISORY TEAM, THINKS LONG POSTPONED PLANNING DECISIONS MAY NOW  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BUJUMB 00595 251526Z

BE TAKEN AND VERY NECESSARY INTERMINISTERIAL COORDINATION BEGUN.

3. HOWEVER, TIMING OF MOVE IS PRESUMABLY MORE BASED ON POLITICAL GROUNDS THAN ON SUDDEN GRB PASSION FOR ECONOMIC RATIONALIZATION, SINCE DIMINUTION OF SIMBANANIYE'S PORTFOLIO CONSTITUTES ANOTHER STEP IN HIS DOWNGRADING. IT SHOULD MUCH REDUCE HIS OPPORTUNITY TO INJECT HIMSELF INTO DECISION-MAKING ON MAJOR DOMESTIC ECONOMIC ISSUES, AND MAY EVEN (WE WOULD HOPE) RESTRICT HIS FUTURE FREEDOM OF ACTION WHEN THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL FOREIGN RELATIONS COMPONENT.

4. AT SAME TIME, SIMBANANIYE'S LOSS DOES NOT ON THIS OCCASION APPEAR TO BE GAIN FOR MINJUSTICE MINANI OR MININTERIOR RWURI. ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE SOURCE CLOSE TO BIHUTE, MINISTER OF JUSTICE MINANI TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY JUST MONTH OR TWO AGO TO PERSUADE PRESIDENT MICOMBERO THAT BIHUTE WAS SPEAKING PRIVATELY AGAINST PRESIDENT. BIHUTE'S APPOINTMENT THUS SEEMS SOMEWHAT OF A REBUFF TO MINANI AS WELL.

5. BIHUTE WAS BORN IN BUBANZA PROVINCE IN NORTHWESTERN BURUNDI AND HAS NOT PLAYED IMPORTANT ROLE IN RECENT TUTSI INFIGHTING. HE WAS AN IBRD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEFORE GOING TO KINSHASA AND HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMY IN 1966-67, WHEN MICOMBERO FIRST CAME TO POWER. IN BURUNDI CONTEXT, HE APPEARS WELL QUALIFIED FOR HIS NEW POST BY EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, TEMPERAMENT AND INTELLIGENCE, AND HIS SEPTEMBER 5 CONVERSATION ON ZAIRE-BURUNDI RELATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR HINTON IN KINSHASA SHOWS HIM TO BE CANDID, REALISTIC, AND MODERATE. HOPEFULLY HE WILL PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED IMPETUS TO BURUNDI'S DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, BUT MAJOR QUESTION MARK WILL BE HIS ABILITY TO DEFEND PLANNING PROCESS FROM INTERVENTION BY POWERFUL INDIVIDUALS AND TO ENFORCE PLANNING DISCIPLINE OVER CABINET OFFICERS. NEW TITLE OF HIS BUREAU SEEMS RATHER UNPROMISING IN THIS REGARD. END COMMENT

6. DECREE OF PREVIOUS DAY (SEPTEMBER 23) PUT BURUNDI SPORTS CONFEDERATION UNDER JRR (UPRONA PARTY'S YOUTH WING) AND GAVE BACK TO JRR'S SECRETARY GENERAL LONGIN KANUMA (MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS UNTIL MARCH 1974) THE RANK AND PERQUISITES OF A MINISTER. COMMENT: THIS IS ANOTHER MOVE IN CURRENT DRIVE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT UPRONA IS DOMINANT INSTITUTION IN BURUNDI. LIKE OTHER CHANGES, IT LEAVES PRACTICAL DOMINANCE OF PRESIDENT AND MILITARY UNAFFECTED.  
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PAGE 03 BUJUMB 00595 251526Z

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** GOVERNMENT REFORM, CABINET, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS, GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 24 SEP 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974BUJUMB00595  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740270-0437  
**From:** BUJUMBURA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740920/aaaaaqpm.tel  
**Line Count:** 108  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** BUJUMBURA 574  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 10 APR 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <10 APR 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <03 JUL 2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SIMBANANIYE LOSES MINISTRY OF PLAN; JRR HEAD GIVEN  
**TAGS:** PINT, BY, (BIHUTE, DONATIEN)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005